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COMMENTARY

on

EMERGING LIBRARY SYSTEMS

THE 1963-66 EVALUATION

of the

NEW YORK STATE PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEMS

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The University of the State of New York
The State Education Department
Division of Library Development
Albany 12224

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Taken from
Speeches and Discussion
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March 3, 1967
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May 15, 1967
Meeting of School Librarians and Administrators
New York City

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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THE BACKGROUND, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY OF THE PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEMS REPORT

By Dr. Lorne H. Woollatt
Associate Commissioner
Office of Research and Evaluation

THE PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEMS EVALUATION

THE ORGANIZATION OF LIBRARY SYSTEMS FOR THE 70's

The Latin word *liber* from which the present word library was derived carries with it the connotation of the manuscript or the copyist's version of the original manuscript. In recent years it has included not only books but pictures, films, records, (pressed) tapes, microfilm, microfiche,or the electronic network. The library systems study is concerned not only with the State's library systems arrangement in the 1960's; it also looks toward the organization of the library systems for the decade of the 70's.

The word "system" as used here means a cohesive collection of materials and services organized for public use. Thus the systems in the public library organization carry the connotation of an interrelated statewide service whose major function is one of providing materials for the user quickly at the local level and at a minimum cost.

From a broader view the State Library is oriented to provide both leadership and assistance in the conduct of the systems' business. Thus the Library Development Division concerns itself with an overall plan for the efficient operation of the statewide systems oriented toward the State's and the Education Department's responsibility.

BACKGROUND

The 1957 *Report of the Commissioner of Education's Committee on Public Library Service* advocated the establishment of library systems, with appropriate State grants-in-aid for their development, as devices to modernize, improve, strengthen, and extend the public library service available to residents of the State. The objective was to make good service convenient to all on as economical a basis as possible. State aid reached the $10 million level in 1963 and the systems had developed to a point where they reached about 95 percent of the State's population. State aid grew to $14 million a year in 1967.

Once the system of libraries blanketed the State, the time had come for evaluation. Therefore it was proposed to examine State, system, and local library resources and services and consumer satisfaction, and to evaluate the effectiveness of all major operations of the systems from the users' standpoint through a factual, statistical, and critical study. It was designed to determine what has happened that is good as a result of system development and State aid; to what major areas the aid money had been allocated; what is still lacking; and what measures are needed for improvement.

The study considered:

> the goals stated in the 1957 Report (Which have been achieved? What unrealized ones are still desirable? What new problems have developed?);
>
> the manner and extent to which the State and localities are fulfilling their roles;

the effect of systems upon the quantity and quality of materials and services accessible to users (What has been accomplished with systems that would not have been accomplished without them?);

the effect of the State agency and its relationship to systems upon service accessible at the local level.

THE DEPARTMENT LOOKS AT ITSELF

In 1964 the Education Department completed a reorganization within its research office which called for revamping the office to include the work of evaluation. Evaluation as used here covers two major areas: those which deal with school programs and those which deal with department programs. The Bureau of Department Programs Evaluation was organized to scrutinize department programs in terms of (1) their continuing need (2) whether their goals are being achieved in relation to the cost and (3) the effectiveness of the techniques used to achieve the goals.

The planners of the evaluative approach felt that any unit which evaluated itself might be held guilty of "inbreeding." On the other hand, evaluations of this nature which were "farmed out" to organizations skilled in the work frequently resulted in areas of concern not being looked at in depth or not looked at in a fashion thought suitable by the operating units. The third alternative, that is, the creation of a unit within the department which would evaluate departmental programs might carry with it the so-called "outside look" through the employment of a skilled consultant who was also an outstanding authority in the field.

Key departmental personnel were asked to submit ideas relative to the kinds of programs which should be evaluated at an early date. One of the first requests was for an evaluation of Public Library Systems. For this study Dr. Lowell Martin, a librarian with an outstanding library background, vice president of the Grolier Society, was employed as the major consultant. Members of the evaluation unit soon learned the language of librarians and rapidly became acquainted with the kinds of tasks for which librarians are responsible. In addition, Dr. Herbert Goldhor, director, Graduate School of Library Science, University of Illinois, and S. Gilbert Prentiss, former State Librarian, were also employed as consultants.

The plan demanded that people schooled in interviewing, research techniques, statistics, and the like, would meet monthly with librarians and people schooled in library work. It was hoped that the combination of these two backgrounds would act both as a rein and a spur for the project, meaning it was unlikely that an air of a "whitewash" would exist, but by the same token it was unlikely that the study would go into depth in areas not directly related to libraries. It would appear that this was a happy union.

STUDY SCOPE AND PRIORITIES

The study involved both library and social research, comparing, where possible and appropriate, the 1957 picture with the current. Although it is felt that all its aspects are of substantial importance, highest priority was assigned to those areas bearing directly upon the relationship of system service programs to use and user satisfaction. In essence, its scope was as follows:

I. LOCAL LEVEL USE, SERVICES, AND USERS. This aspect attempted to determine the amount and kinds of use, public attitudes, and the extent to which systems are reacting to and meeting local library and community needs.

II. SYSTEM AND LOCAL LEVEL RESOURCES IN COLLECTIONS, PERSONNEL, AND PHYSICAL FACILITIES.

A. Collections. One approach evaluated the quality and quantity of material accessible to library users.

B. Personnel. Here the effect of local library staff ability on system activities was studied to compare and relate quantity and quality of system and local staffs with authoritative recommendations and program needs.

C. Physical facilities. Another substudy evaluated system and local library buildings and equipment in terms of local conditions and present and projected needs.

D. Central libraries. Evaluated here were: the quality and quantity of central library collections, personnel, operations, and service rendered, policy development, attitudes, the effectiveness of this concept, problems of divided responsibilities and collections, support and compensation, the need for measures to improve staffing and facilities, and the question of continuation of the Central Book Aid program after a 10-year, 100,000-volume development period.

III. SYSTEM STRUCTURE, SERVICES, AND SPECIAL PROBLEMS.

A. System structure. This aspect of the evaluation covered the trusteeship; economy and efficiency of business and management practices; system relationships with the State, other library agencies, local and county governments, other educational services and agencies, and the potential in intersystem cooperation.

B. System services. One aspect evaluated services directly and indirectly affecting local service and resources.

C. Universal borrowing privilege. The validity of this concept in terms of problems and acceptance, was studied with emphasis on the question of who uses the privilege and why.

IV. FINANCE: SYSTEM AND LOCAL LIBRARY. Here financial support was studied, as well as expenditures and financial managements, adequacy, trends, actual and potential, seeking answers to such questions as:

A. Is there enough money to do the job that is needed? If not, from where should additional support come? Should it be used at the system or local level or both?

B. How is the money being spent and is enough translated into benefits to users?

C. Is the State aid formula adequate? Are equalization factors needed? Is the local incentive feature working?

V. STATE FUNCTION AND RESOURCES. This phase evaluated the adequacy of State agency's resources, services, and support in terms of its proper role and relationships to systems and their activities.

The evaluation staff consisted of three professional persons supported by clerks and typists plus special consultants as needed. Each system and central library as well as about 100 local libraries were visited. A typical staff visit consisted of substantial interviews and detailed sample checking of resources. Systematic notes were taken and staff papers prepared from which the final report was written. As a result all recommendations are supported with substantial observational records. A user survey of 39 libraries was made as part of the survey.

In connection with the visits all available statistics were analyzed. Pertinent special reports and studies were reviewed. A number of related special studies were

undertaken simultaneously including the important processing study by Nelson Associates and a special survey of library buildings by the Library Development Division.

Three areas of the survey warrant special comment because of their unique features and their importance to a proper understanding of the future of the public library program. The first area for special comment is the user survey. Many user surveys have been made in the past and much valuable information has been obtained from them. However, practically all such user surveys were limited to reporting on how many people came to the library, who they were, what they wanted, and what they got. They did not explore the question of what proportion of the people of certain types came to the libraries. The New York State User Survey did answer this question and thus yielded a new level of information that provided important support for certain recommendations. For instance, the fact that few libraries are used by any substantial proportion of the low education group is of importance. Similarly, the fact that a high proportion of college graduates use the better libraries is of great interest.

Another special feature differentiating this user survey from prior ones is the large number of libraries included. This feature has provided an indicator of the variation in use in different kinds of libraries in different kinds of communities. From this information one can make a reasonable estimate of the probability that a person of a certain educational level will enter the library in a week. By taking the number of people in the State, as reported in the 1960 United States Census, and multiplying by the probability of that type of person entering the library as obtained from the user survey, an estimate of the number of persons of that type entering the public libraries of the State can be obtained. Summing the figures for the various types of persons one can secure an estimate of the number of public library visitors in the State. The figure obtained is about 550,000 per week for 1960 populations.

This new dimension of the proportion of certain types using the library was secured by having the visiting respondent indicate his place of residence so that it could be compared to the U.S. Census enumerations in the same area. Thus the number of users of a particular educational level was obtained and compared to the actual number of the same educational level as reported by the Census.

A second special contribution of the survey to library policy formation was the development of a long-term forecast of public library use assuming that library policies remain about the same as at present. For this the basic U.S. Census population estimates for New York State were used plus the New York State Education Department estimates of trends in education to give 1985 estimates of population by educational attainment. These 1985 estimates were then multiplied by the probability of different kinds of persons visiting the library in a week (as was done in making the previous 1960 estimates). The result indicated that the library users per week would exceed 900,000 in 1985, an increase of 69 percent over the 1960 level of about 550,000. The large increase is the result of the increased population plus the increased level of education in that population. Thus the public libraries must have an average annual increase of almost 3 percent a year just to keep even with the changing population of the State.

The third area of special interest is finance. The study was able to relate fiscal support of libraries, equalized assessed valuation, and the quality of libraries. It indicated that very few central libraries received more than 1.0 mill per dollar of valuation and few received less than .4 of a mill per dollar of valuation. Even with the upper limit of 1.0 mill some communities would be unable to raise as much as $3 per capita for library expenditures. Of the 14 central libraries collecting .7 of a mill or more, six reach a per capita support level of less than $4 because of their low full valuation per capita. The library with the lowest per capita of the six has a millage of .746 with per capita tax funds of only $2.09. This material offers strong support to arguments for an ability to pay formula.

FINDINGS

The program today was designed to unfold sequentially the various facets of the evaluation. It is my intention, therefore, to avoid getting over into the other areas on your program by summarizing the findings in broad brush strokes within larger general categories.

1. Systematization in New York State has advanced library service. Those of us connected with the study who might be loosely classified as nonlibrarians were repeatedly impressed with the service capability at the local level. The contrast was made more striking because our student days had been spent working in libraries organized along different lines.

2. Variations in library practice between and within systems vary widely. On the positive side this means that different approaches are being used to solve similar problems in different areas and they appear to be equally satisfactory. On the negative side, however, there persists some resistance to change as well as a reluctance to accept new developments.

3. The middle and upper classes are the users of the libraries. This was suspected in some quarters but the study brought the fact sharply into focus. Further study will be needed to ascertain why, because it is not sufficient to accept the notion that those who can't read - won't read. The libraries may have to retool their offerings so that the educationally deprived will find something of interest.

4. Larger service areas and cooperative arrangements are suited to modern conditions. The service aspect of the library has increased at a rapid pace in recent years. The housing, the furniture, the storage and transportation arrangements, the processing, and the acquisition of materials have not always kept pace.

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

A corollary of findings concerns future planning. Again broad brush strokes will be used to single out areas of concern for the decade of the 70's.

1. The present number of systems might well be reduced by the end of the 70's. This is an objective common to many fields, and the reduction will depend upon travel developments. If the newer forms of transportation permit service at a much faster rate, the boundaries of an area may be broadened considerably.

2. Many of the loose federations in existence should be nurtured so that they grow into true systems. Regardless of existing arrangements, there are loose federations of libraries and systems which have a potential for improved services.

3. Improved facilities on accessible sites represent a primary goal. Libraries are undergoing renovation and modernization. The truth of the matter is that many of them were built before the turn of the century. Many exist in decaying parts of large cities surrounded by industrial projects. They have lived their life of usefulness. The new facilities should be located on sites which are readily accessible by transportation and should be designed to operate in a society which is rapidly moving toward the turn of another century.

4. Local support alone is far from sufficient to provide adequate library service and as this study moved through various stages it became more apparent.

The base for the support of library service must be broadened. The demand for service has outstripped the support of such service.

5. Library service of systems, colleges, and schools should be maximally intermeshed. Historically the development of these various institutions has brought different modes of operation.

6. Special training for administrators in library systems must be strengthened. It became apparent during the course of the study that the supply of trained librarians, and particularly trained library administrators, is related to the general shortage of professional people. The shortage of trained library administrators seems to be large enough to warrant special consideration.

In conclusion I am happy to have been associated with this study during the two-year period of its duration, and I will continue to have interest in the progress of the work of the committees that follow. I join with you in looking forward to the remainder of today's program.

* * * * * * * * * * *

THE FINDINGS OF THE PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM STUDY

By S. Gilbert Prentiss
Consultant

It is my assignment today to report to you on the findings of the Evaluation Study of the Public Library System Program in New York State, and I shall be at pains to keep my remarks in that context, even though I suspect that my greater strengths lie in the areas of speculation, pontification, and distortion.

So, in the interest of simplicity and some kind of order, I propose to make my pedestrian way, chapter by chapter, through the report, skipping for the most part those findings which seem to me to relate chiefly to administrative growing pains and other problems not fundamental in the sense of involving structural or legislative change.

I shall permit myself one brief general comment before moving into specifics. All of us, I think, have a kind of journalistic inclination to hope and expect that a study of this nature will turn up at least a few sensationally new and exciting revelations about whatever it is that is being studied; when in actual fact, generally, the most that such a study can do - and perhaps the most useful contribution it can make - is to confirm the educated guess; to assemble and substantiate what is already known and surmised about the subject, and give it the form and substance it needs in order to serve as a basis for moving forward.

This is the nature of the present Evaluation Study of the Public Library Systems; this, and the secondary but extremely important function (which Dr. Woollatt has already mentioned), of serving as a progress report to those who have an interest and a right to know.

And now to system services:

SERVICES

The services which public library systems in New York State perform, at least in theory, are what the systems and their member libraries feel are most needed in order to extend and improve public library service in the areas served by the systems; with only two or three exceptions system services are neither mandated nor are they made quid pro quo provisions for receipt of State aid. Although for the most part system services are the "wholesale" type, rendered to community libraries rather than directly to library users, there is nothing other than the realities of their relationship with the member libraries which says the systems cannot serve users directly, and in certain situations many of them do.

As the chart in the evaluation report shows, there are some 65 different services (depending on how you count them) being offered by systems, ranging from the operation of bookmobiles to payroll management. The variation in services rendered by the systems throughout the State is one of degree more than of kind.

Perhaps more than any other feature, New York's system plan has been characterized by the autonomy and independence of the member libraries. Thus, the services which the systems offer to their community libraries to help bring about improved service are literally offered to them, and unfortunately it is in the nature of human nature that often the libraries which most need this kind of help are the last to accept what is offered. The result is, of course, that one of the most treasured virtues of the New York system program may have turned out to be, in the short-term sense at least, one of its serious weaknesses.

Whether it will continue to be as serious a problem, and what can or should be done about it is the kind of judgement it will be necessary to make in planning for the future.

RESOURCES

The resources of the public libraries of New York State have clearly been improved as a result of the systems program. One of the very basic features of the library system concept is, of course, that library resources shall be shared, thus making it possible for the individual to use materials and services which his own community library could not afford.

Expenditures for library materials during the period 1957-1964 in New York State increased by about 141 percent, exceeding the national average. The rate of acquisition of books has doubled or tripled in most system areas, although because of increased weeding (again thanks to systems) and greater attention to nonbook materials (i.e. mainly periodicals and audiovisual materials), the per capita book holdings do not always reflect this condition. Nevertheless, the average per capita holdings of all types of materials increased from 1.7 per capita to 2.6, an appreciable gain.

Film holdings have grown 80 percent since 1960, and the development of a State audiovisual collection from Federal funds has further helped to make films available. Full-time audiovisual consultants in the State agency and in four upstate systems are helping to solve some of the problems that attend the use of these less traditional library materials.

One of the more obvious and cordially received of all system accomplishments is the substantial gain in the number of fresh books which a library user sees in his local library, whether or not that library has stepped up its own purchases. Book pools, rotating collections, and other material-sharing techniques, although varying widely from system to system, have brought a steady flow of materials new to each community library, where formerly new items were pitifully small.

When, as part of the evaluation study, collections were measured against selected lists of juvenile, teenage, and reference titles, the largest libraries consistently scored highest; nevertheless, great variation existed within size categories, regardless of the level of support. System programs and responsiveness to system services by the member libraries appeared to be important factors contributing to this variation.

In similar tests of reference performance, individual libraries also varied widely. Some cases of poor performance, accounted for by staff failures, were found in spite of strong resources, but again system programs and member library responsiveness appeared to be very important factors. (It would have been interesting and useful to make comparisons here with the performance of presystem or nonsystem libraries, but unfortunately the data to do that is not available.)

A key factor of the 1958 legislation was the provision for strengthening the central libraries in systems, in recognition of the principle that it is the strongest library in the system which, in many respects, establishes the performance level of the system. The evaluation study has also shown that central libraries are an important first line of defense in backstopping community libraries; several central libraries provided over half of the interlibrary loan materials in their regions. The central libraries are having their problems, however. Only a very few would be able to consistently perform at higher than a college undergraduate level. Mainly because of student pressures there is a need to duplicate certain titles rather heavily, yet available funds are not adequate to develop a collection which has both range and depth, and still provides a sufficient number of duplicate copies.

Most central libraries feel, with what appears to be ample justification, that the services they are rendering for the systemwide areas are placing a greater burden on them than they can or should be expected to carry without additional support from some source beyond the central city itself. (We shall come back to this problem as an aspect of "Finance.")

Another library resource, which takes second place to none in importance, is, of course, personnel. Anyone who has been hoping that the study would reveal some hopeful insights into this problem is in for a letdown; the findings are all in the direction of confirming the mass of discouraging evidence which has confronted us right along. Personnel shortages, common to the library field as a whole, continue to be one of the most serious problems of systems and their member libraries. It is not unusual to find from 20 to 25 percent of established positions unfilled.

In spite of some excellent efforts to improve the effectiveness of personnel, weakness in this area remains one of the critical problems of the entire system program. Inservice training programs conducted by the systems and the Library Development Division have helped considerably. They are still insufficient, however, and are seriously handicapped in cooperative and federated systems because local staff most in need of training are least inclined to take advantage of opportunities offered to them through system and State efforts.

Buildings are another basic library resource. Good library service is sometimes given from public library buildings which are overcrowded, badly located, and otherwise unsuited to the needs of today, but it is nonetheless true that a modern library building which reflects the opposite of these qualities is a tremendous stimulus to increased use and support and superior service. The statewide public library building picture is not one of the most cheerful aspects of the statewide library situation.

In general, State aid for library systems has not been used for construction purposes, and a longstanding backlog of building needs has been aggravated by the growth of collections and services. However, by mid-1966, 58 building projects had been approved for Federal Library Services and Construction Act funding, including 20 central library and/or system buildings.

A building survey, conducted by the Library Development Division in late 1966 showed that:

(1) An immediate need exists for 2.9 million square feet of space in libraries serving over 2,500 people.

(2) At least 12 systems are being forced to curtail programs because of space restrictions.

(3) Other systems cannot expand programs beyond present levels.

(4) Most central libraries face serious problems in both shelving space and seating capacity, even to serve their own immediate communities.

The survey suggests that simply to correct existing space deficiencies at the local level in communities of more than 2,500 people (at a minimal estimate of $25 per square foot) will require nearly $73 million.

On the related subject of library equipment, the study notes that systems are bringing many of the advantages of modern equipment to libraries which otherwise could not possibly afford them. All but one of the upstate systems, for example, are now connected by teletype to the State Library. Photoduplication facilities are available in most systems (even though the surveyors noted that often photoduplication facilities

do not seem to be used as much as they might be); computers are used in a few systems for ordering, payroll accounting, circulation control, materials processing, etc.; and a number of other machine applications to traditional procedures have been innovated by the systems.

ACCESSIBILITY

The problem of accessibility is no less important in library service than it is in the offering of any other kind of service which is intended for wide general use. In library practice, accessibility has three main facets:

(1) Legal accessibility, or the individual's right to use certain library collections and services.

(2) Physical accessibility, involving questions of distance, time, and convenience in using those collections which are legally accessible to him.

(3) Bibliographic accessibility, or the means available to the individual for "remote browsing" - the tools to help him identify which of the materials, in the collections to which he has legal access, will meet his particular need.

Library systems have had a profound effect on accessibility; the mere fact of making the resources of all of the libraries in a system legally accessible to all residents of the system area stands by itself as an immensely significant improvement in the service potential for those with weaker local libraries.

Some of the findings of the study in respect to the various aspects of accessibility are as follows:

From 5 percent to 20 percent and higher of direct use of most public libraries in systems appears to be by nonresidents, with the greatest amounts of such use occurring in the best libraries. Since localities are not required to make a minimum library effort, there has been fear of, and in a few cases there exist, inequities resulting from nonresident use of stronger libraries without adequate compensation for such use.

Bookmobiles have been widely and successfully employed by systems to bring limited service closer to people in sparsely settled areas, but an equity problem likewise exists here when no local contribution is made toward their support.

Although systems are employing a number of effective devices to minimize the distance factor (e.g. book pools, rotating collections, interlibrary loans, bookmobiles, modern communication and duplication equipment, and the privilege of returning books anywhere in the system), physical inaccessibility is still a seriously limiting factor for most library users, especially for high school students and children. "Reading centers," or "stations," operated by a few of the systems, usually by contract with the locality involved, appear in theory to be one of the best solutions yet devised for meeting the problem of direct service to the community which is too small to maintain an effective chartered library.

Of all the techniques for extending physical accessibility, the one which seems most often to successfully meet specific user needs, and to have the greatest potential is the interlibrary loan. That the upstate use of interlibrary loans increased 200 percent from 1957 to 1964 attests to their usefulness.

Interlibrary lending and borrowing on such a scale is relatively new, however, and the study reports a number of problems which tend to hold down the effectiveness of interlibrary loan service.

(1) There is, for example, a good deal of variation in interlibrary loan policies from system to system.

(2) Interlibrary loan cost data is still relatively meager, but it is evident that costs per loan are high enough to raise questions about the possible need to make a charge for this service.

(3) The interval between the request and the receipt of an interlibrary loan is excessively long in most cases.

(4) Inadequate collections at all levels clearly limit user satisfaction, but of equal or greater importance are staff failures to properly identify user needs and translate them into requests for specific materials. Lack of locator tools and bibliographic aids - a problem of bibliographic accessibility - is another factor contributing to user disappointment.

(5) The role of the State Library in backstopping systems has not yet been clearly defined and understood throughout the State, nor has the State Library been given the support it needs to carry out this function effectively.

(6) Cooperation with college and special libraries in meeting interlibrary loan requests is very spotty and, in all but a few instances, involves no compensation to the lending libraries.

ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNMENT

Of the three types of systems possible under New York State law - consolidated, federated, and cooperative - the cooperative offers the greatest degree of flexibility and local autonomy, and has been largely responsible for the strong surge of system development, eventually covering the entire State, following the 1958 legislation.

It is the conclusion of the study that while some of the systems may be operating at marginal or submarginal support levels under the present formula, their size, measured in area and population served, appears to be satisfactory for most purposes. Contracts and other types of agreements between systems are already being employed to some extent, and seem to offer the greatest promise where increased efficiency would result from a larger operation, as in book processing, for example.

While the systems themselves may be large enough, the cooperative systems have not solved the perennial problem of the too-small, independent community library, and in some respects they may even have aggravated it. (Parenthetically, the frequently made recommendation that the State should refuse to renew the charters of these small libraries is not a solution to the problem either.)

All of the evidence of the evaluation study - pattern of use, finance, personnel, and common sense organization - bear out what has at times seemed to be clearer to interested persons on the periphery of the library enterprise than to many of those more directly involved in it, that the continued improvement of library service is ultimately dependent on a much closer coordination than presently exists between public libraries and other types of libraries. While interlibrary cooperation and the sharing of resources is obviously essential for meeting highly specialized library needs, cooperation is not without its virtues at all levels of library service.

One particularly serious manifestation of that need appears in those communities which are attempting to maintain a school library and a public library, and perhaps a community college library, all of which are rendering very much the same kind of services to a population which is able to support only one good library program. The study notes surprisingly little effort to approach this problem in any fundamental sense.

USERS AND USES OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES

The ideal way, of course, to evaluate a library program would be to measure all the different kinds of uses people are making of libraries, and then compare these measurements against other libraries, other periods of time, and against some reasonable standards of expectation. The unhappy truth is that this cannot be done because the necessary records of use simply do not exist; we do not, in fact, even have common units of measurement which can be applied to library use.

In an effort to get some idea of how the libraries in systems are being used, the evaluation study did attempt some on-the-scene user surveys in a selected group of libraries. Some useful, if not surprising, things were learned. It was learned, for example, that:

(1) The greatest intensity of library use was among college graduates, with 15 to 30 percent of the total graduates visiting some libraries within one week. Those libraries with the heaviest use by college graduates were not necessarily the largest nor the strongest, nor those with the highest per capita expenditures.

(2) The low intensity of use among those persons over 25 years of age with less than a high school education suggests the possibility that the library programs are not well designed to attract persons with a limited education.

(3) Intensity of use dropped off rapidly as distance increased and very few libraries (other than strong central libraries) drew more than 10 percent of their users from more than 10 miles.

(4) Data from the user survey indicated that more than half of the users were students; thus, the major use of the public library is inextricably intertwined with the educational process. In fact, the student load is currently the chief justification for the provision of research and study facilities in many public libraries.

THE ROLE OF THE STATE

I am sure that no one in this group questions the fact of the increasingly important role of the State in educational matters generally, and the study outlines a variety of reasons why this is the case. The report describes the relationship of libraries to the larger educational enterprise in the State, and the undeniable acceptance by the State of its role as an active partner in all aspects of statewide library development - legislative, fiscal, and service. The administrative separateness of school and public library responsibilities within State government itself, however, is recognized as detrimental to the closest coordination of these services in the local communities of the State.

The Library Development Division is commended for its effectiveness in furthering the systems program to date, but a number of areas are identified where existing library needs in the State imply a greater concentration of effort by the State Library agency - in respect to library service to students, to those we are calling the disadvantaged, to the populations of institutions of all types, to blind and other handicapped persons, in the employment of nonbook materials, and in the transmission of specialized information. Particularly, the importance is noted of the role of the State agency in respect to the relationship of the several strong and distinct developing programs, one to another: the public library systems, school libraries, and the 3R's program.

The point is developed in this section of the report that the placing of more of the responsibility for supervisory functions on the systems themselves would help to

resolve some of the problems of an overburdened State agency and be in the direction of strengthening the systems.

Finally, the important role which the State Library plays in backstopping the systems in an interlibrary loan sense is described, and the point is made that the State Library has been handicapped in strengthening its resources to do that job by lack of a clear, statewide understanding of the role it should play in a statewide system.

MANAGEMENT

Many of the operations in libraries, once an initial professional judgement has been made, clearly fall under the heading of management, and there are strong indications that library service would benefit much, and in some instances unit costs could be reduced, by bringing management know-how and techniques to bear on them. The processing of books is an example of an area where this is especially true; in this case it was felt that a separate supplemental study by a firm of management consultants was justified in order to determine whether there might be advantages in further centralization and automation of materials processing.

The answer proved to be an unequivocal "yes," and under the leadership of the Library Development Division a good deal of progress has already been made in setting up the machinery to implement these sweeping recommendations.

Evidence, in the form of widely varying costs, and effectiveness, for the same operation, indicates that a good share of the operations carried on in libraries are in need of the kind of management analysis materials processing has received. The study notes, particularly, book selection in systems as an area where both high costs and excessive time lags might be reduced by procedural changes which would not be detrimental to the end product.

SPECIAL PROBLEMS OF THE NEW YORK CITY LIBRARIES

Because the public library system program makes relatively dramatic changes in the structure of public library service outside metropolitan areas, whereas its effect on metropolitan libraries, such as the three which serve New York City, is limited mainly to the additional support which State aid brings, it is easy to become relatively preoccupied with the many problems of rural library service. The study did, however, attempt to measure the impact of the systems program on the New York City libraries, to determine whether or not that effort was fully commensurate with the one-half of the State's residents served by these libraries. It made an effort to assess the enormous problems which these libraries face - problems, incidently, which just plain money would go a long way toward correcting.

The fact seems clear that State aid has played a significant role in maintaining whatever degree of excellence the New York City libraries have achieved in recent years, and at the time of the study, local support had been increasing faster than State support, indicating that it had not had the effect of displacing local support. (Unfortunately, that state of affairs did not seem to prevail in 1966.)

The study notes the need for vastly more study and experimentation in reaching a broader segment of the population in New York City, particularly the great numbers of disadvantaged persons who live there. It likewise points to the need to explore, and to devote more State funds to the exploration of the possible advantages of joint action among the three separate libraries.

FINANCE

I am quite sure that placing the chapter on FINANCE at what is practically the end of the report should not be interpreted to mean that anyone thought it was least important; I suspect it was more likely a case of saving the best until last.

Anyway, it is gratifying to note that all three sources of public library tax revenue, local, State, and Federal, gained during the 1957-1965 period to the point where a 100 percent increase in operating expenditures was made possible. Counteracting this was a decrease in the value of the buying power of the library dollar of at least 40 percent, a fact of life which is so self-evident that it tends to get overlooked. (This means, incidently, that a minimum standard of library support of $3 per capita in 1957 would today have to be revised to somewhere between $4 and $5.)

In 1965 the proportionate shares of the three levels of government were: local 76 percent, State 17 percent, and Federal 7 percent. While total State support increased substantially during the period, because of the expansion in numbers and size of systems, as the State-aid-formula yield began to level off in 1961, the ratio of State to local support decreased from 20 percent to the 17 percent figure. Federal aid, which has strengthened the Library Development Division and made possible many important research and experimental projects as well as financed an unprecedented upswing in construction, was of course nonexistent prior to 1956. Included in the local support item are the appropriations of some 20 counties, a highly desirable trend, even though in most cases the county's contribution is still a very modest one.

All systems are forced to be highly selective in the services they render, but central libraries, especially, are finding it difficult to carry on their systemwide responsibilities. In most cases less than 50 percent of the population they are expected to serve contribute to their support. Central book aid is undoubtedly strengthening the smaller libraries, but for the most part the central library burden overextends collections, staffs, and facilities. Legislation passed in 1966 will help this situation, but actually its main effect is to offset cost increases due to inflation.

Some of the fiscal data assembled by the report clearly points up a group of related conditions of library finance which have special significance for future planning. The basic point is that there is great variation at the local level in both the ability and the willingness to support library service. Some areas, receiving service directly from system headquarters and from neighboring libraries, contribute nothing to library support, and many have not made a reasonable local effort to carry their fair share. At the same time, there are communities where full or assessed valuation is so low that the maximum rate of taxation that can reasonably be expected for library purposes will not yield an adequate level of support.

SUMMARY

The final chapters of the report on recommendations, it seems to me, fit more properly in papers and discussion to come than in this review of the findings of the evaluation study. So, if I may summarize at this point a summary which already suffers from oversummarizing, I would like to run quickly through some of the major impressions which the report leaves with me.

There is, first, the breathtaking quality of the projection of public library use, which conservatively predicts at least a doubling of use in the next 20 years.

There is the sense one gets of the critical pressures for coordination of the total library effort - coordination which involves all types of libraries and all levels of government.

There is the awareness of the urgency and magnitude of some of the problems facing the metropolitan libraries, which serve directly the majority of residents of the State, and constitute a major library resource for all of the systems and all of the people of the State.

The study points up the overwhelming volume of student use of public libraries, and the growing realization that the public library is the only library agency which is charged with the responsibility for service to all members of the community.

The study implies, at least, the common failure of library administrators and library trustees to define the goals of their libraries in the philosophical sense; not just the how-to-do-it goals of how many books and staff members are needed, but the more basic questions of what they expect the library to do <u>for</u> and <u>to</u> the community.

The study notes the importance of State leadership and participation in library affairs, and the number of library problems which call for State and national solutions; the impact of the right kind of buildings on library service, and the great backlog of building needs which exist in the State; the advantages which follow more emphasis on the administrative management aspects of library practice as library operations are stepped up in size, complexity, and pace; and the related problem, which plagued this study more than a little, of the lack of more revealing measurements of library use.

Problems are by no means the only findings of the study; one gets above all, I think, a sense of immense accomplishment here, of the cumulative effort of many, many persons over a period of years to erect a unique statewide library system and to bring it to an impressive degree of effectiveness. And as dramatic as that progress has been, there is the impression that the system's greatest strength may still lie in its almost unlimited potential, in the capacity of the basic concept to grow and to adjust to the exponential rate of change which is the leading characteristic of our times.

At the same time it is impossible not to be aware of the tortured and halting nature of much of this forward movement, and of the residue of stubborn and frustrating resistance to the acceptance of help where it is most needed. One is brought face-to-face in evaluating the New York systems program, with a dilemma which must vex many democratic institutions - the question of the extent to which the whole enterprise should be geared down to the weakest members and the foot-draggers. And the related question of how far democracy can be carried in the operation of a program of service, before the welfare of the majority is jeopardized. Or, to put the question differently, can society afford to let library service be as poor as the leadership in some communities would allow it to become?

And finally, in spite of all the problems, the shortcomings, and the inadequacies which the study reveals, one detects throughout the State a strong current of profound change - changes which have already occurred and changes in process, affecting the whole fabric of library service in the State. Library service is not unlike many other services, in that until it is brought up to a certain minimum quality of performance it really does not amount to very much; but once it escapes the depression syndrome its inherent virtues tend to take over and, in a sense, become almost self-generating. With the help of systems, and other recent developments which libraries have going for them, more and more individual libraries are meeting and crossing what might be called a threshold of viability. It does not seem to me an exaggeration to characterize the total library situation in New York State as being at the leading edge of a genuine breakthrough - a point at which all of the available qualities of wisdom and leadership are needed in order to exploit and guide this growing momentum into the most useful patterns of library service which will meet <u>all</u> the library needs of <u>all</u> of the people of the State.

EMERGING LIBRARY SYSTEMS: THE 1963-66 EVALUATION OF THE NEW YORK STATE PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEMS

REACTION

Viewpoint of a metropolitan system director - Andrew Geddes, Director
The Nassau Library System

Now, after 2½ years of study, the systems evaluation report is completed. I have been asked to give my reactions to it. I should simply say "Wow! It's a tremendous job reflecting the care and effort of many people in a splendid team effort which will have many long-range implications" - and quit. To make a 5-minute comment on a report of this magnitude seems almost presumptuous, for by the attempt to identify its major significance to a metropolitan area system I must appear to slight many of the very excellent individual recommendations. Yet it would be most unfortunate to dissipate our combined energies in pursuit of significant fragments of the whole at the expense of what I feel should be a central focus for our attention and the one with greatest long-range consequences: namely, to apply the recommendations, not only to the limited objective of broadening public library systems, but specifically toward the creation of an actual design for multiagency systems on a regional or area basis.

This objective for overall library development is not new. It derives from an earlier report that is already 10 years old, the 1957 *Report of the Commissioner of Education's Committee on Public Library Service*. Let me quote a section of this earlier study:

> "The State should encourage the formation of systems of library service, which will evaluate the resources, assess the potential for development, and coordinate the patterns of service of libraries of all types within a region or area."

Systems have indeed developed in the intervening period, but what we appear to be headed for are not systems which effectively coordinate <u>all</u> library service within a geographic area, but rather systems linking libraries by type. The systems evaluation points out the need to coordinate the 3R's program with the public library systems. We should add to that an equally urgent need to coordinate the public library and the 3R's systems with the supplementary education centers developing with ESEA Title III funds which offer services to public and private elementary and secondary school libraries. Unlike the 3R's program, which at this stage is an apparatus and framework for a potential system, these Title III agencies are already beginning to function as resources centers, processing centers, and bibliographic centers. Legislation has even been introduced which would permit these Title III agencies to be incorporated in order to be eligible for State funds. We are therefore concerned with three types of library systems operating or about to operate in overlapping areas of functional and geographical responsibility and we have not really considered the vast network of libraries which are part of the State university and community college complex.

I regret that there is still missing from the statewide library proposal a structure through which <u>all</u> library needs within a region can be analyzed and coordinated, with the mandate to establish parameters against which public library, school library, and college and university library development can be measured and related to each other.

Funding certainly would appear to make more sense when based on regional analysis which would permit more efficient use of the potential funding "mix" made up of local, county, State, and Federal monies available within the area for all types of libraries. Standards of service to be rendered by units within defined areas could delineate and sharpen functional objectives, help eliminate confusion of responsibility, and relieve certain libraries of pressures caused by the failure of other library agencies within the region to perform properly.

Dr. Martin recommends that the proposed multiagency systems might also be viewed in the future as regional library authorities which ultimately might assume some chartering and registration activities now handled by the State agency. Whether such a long-range structure of "intermediate districts" placed between local and State agency will be feasible for library functions alone may be doubtful without further decentralization of a broader range of State agency functions. Nevertheless, implementation of the major thrust of both Dr. Martin's recommendations and the 19 other recommendations contained in Section 13 of the system report will require our concentration on the development of a design or organization based not only on functional coordination of library planning and development within the Education Department, but on the further development of systems of library services within specified regions to provide generalized services common to libraries regardless of type. I sincerely hope we move in that direction this weekend so that 10 years from now someone can not open a presentation with a 20-year-old quote calling for a unified system of library service in New York State.

Viewpoint of a rural system director - Murray L. Bob, Director
Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Library System

I should begin by stating that *Emerging Library Systems*, the evaluation report, is one of the most stimulating, useful, thorough, and candid library surveys I have ever read. Its authors, as well as its commissioners - the State Education Department and the Library Development Division - are to be congratulated. I should also indicate my agreement with the major recommendations of the survey, as well as with the proposals of the "Memorandum on Emerging Library Systems" by Eisner, Geddes, and Lindauer.

Perhaps the only way I can contribute to this discussion is by underscoring a number of slightly different, related points.

First. I would stress the need for functional internal consolidation of cooperative library system organizational structures. One of the weaknesses which the survey uncovered is the polarization in many cooperative library systems of system and central library. The possibilities for friction, rivalry, and wasteful duplication are manifold. This, despite the fact that the system can no more exist meaningfully without the central library than the central library can exist without the system. I would therefore suggest that the State provide special incentives for such functional consolidations as unified management of system and central library and/or joint use of personnel.

Charity begins at home, and if we are to speak, as the survey does, of the "need for coordinating library service," let us begin coordinating within systems. And within systems there is no more important coordination to be achieved than that between system and central library.

New York State's construction title guidelines (for LSCA grants) reward planning for joint system-central library physical facilities. It might therefore seem that incentives should be offered for service title projects involving joint use of personnel or joint management. Indeed, our experience at the Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Library System clearly indicates that shared physical facilities suggest, if they do not indeed create, a situation which cries aloud for joint use of personnel. Economies of scale are a natural consequence of functional consolidation and of these economies none is more important than the possibility for optimal use of scarce professional personnel.

Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Library System has just embarked on an experiment involving system management of the major central library on an annual, contractual, fee basis. Certainly this is not the only way to effect the end of functional consolidation of system and central library. However, I would emphasize the validity of the end itself and I would further suggest that monetary incentives to stimulate such arrangements be established as part of New York State Education Law, or, among services-title-aidable projects.

Second. I strongly endorse the proposal for nonpublic library membership in library systems. Such membership may be less urgent for the relatively strong college libraries of the State University of New York, but system membership most certainly is needed so far as the comparatively impoverished community college libraries are concerned. The latter, typically, have few books and periodicals, a tiny staff, and an inadequate budget. They need system help: they can benefit from system processing, the interloan-TWX network, system film collections, the central book aid program, and system professional assistance.

I stress community college membership in library systems for three reasons:

I. The community college, as its name implies, is more like a public library than is any other educational instrumentality. It is community-oriented, responsive to the needs - vocational, educational, and cultural - of the community, as is the public library. Attendance at the community college is noncompulsory; the community college serves people of all ages (except children), and tends to be relatively nonexclusive.

II. The community college library, typically, is about the same size (in terms of collection, acquisition rate, number of staff) as a city branch library or a member of a public library system. Thus, its scale makes it assimilable to the system. Its books can be processed, its interloans handled, its faculty and students served with relatively little stress by existent library systems. Moreover, the typical acquisition pattern of the community college library is likely to be similar to that of system central library under the central book aid program. Thus, both the community college and the central library are likely to select from *Choice* preeminently. Community college membership in library systems might help avoid needless duplication of certain materials and might create the possibility for building areas of collection specialization.

III. Finally, assimilation may be facilitated by the fact that community colleges are still at the beginning of their development. As a consequence, there is, perhaps, less vested interest to contend with.

Third. As far as public schools are concerned, two points might be made:

I. There is a need for mandated school district support of public libraries - inasmuch as the major usage of the public library is by the student. It is interesting that the surveyors found that, on an average, school district public libraries were considerably more viable, financially, than village, town, or association libraries. The school district tax base is generally wider, and apparently permits fewer exemptions, typically, than do other tax bases. And, perhaps, it is easier for public libraries to get more money when they are identified with education.

II. Whether or not existent traditional school libraries become system members, it is surely the case that the burgeoning new ESEA Title II and Title III "supplementary educational centers," "regional reference libraries," "regional instructional materials centers" or whatever the rose by any other name may be called - it is surely the case that these creatures should become part of library systems. Otherwise they will end by wastefully duplicating (if they are not already doing so) public library facilities. The time for such integration is now, before a vested interest develops.

In our area, $45,000 has apparently been approved for expenditure by a local BOCES, "to develop a large regional reference library and study center to complement local school libraries." I quote from the project's "Major Objective." A "large" regional reference library for $45,000? We further learn from the project description that the reference library will be divided into two units, at either end of the county, to be served by daily truck delivery, and will remain open evenings, Saturdays, etc.

Is this trip really necessary? Forty-five thousand dollars spent on two existing public libraries would have likely paid more dividends than are to be gained by adding two more inherently weak units.

Fourth. Last but not least, I would suggest that just as mandated school district support is in order for public libraries, mandated county support for public library systems is very much in order.

NEXT STEPS FOR LIBRARY SERVICE IN NEW YORK STATE

By Dr. Lowell A. Martin, Editorial Vice-President
Grolier Society, Inc.

I believe I know how I got on this spot. Those planning the conference today evidently thought there should be a session devoted to "next steps," and I was left over.

Once I was asked, I couldn't resist the temptation. The rest of us are several steps behind New York State; we usually look to you for "next steps." Now you turn this around and ask me what you should do, and I am not likely to get this chance again, so here goes.

Seriously though, probably the most sensible thing I could say is, "You in New York are taking steps on several fronts, you have active plans for various others. Keep up the good work." If I were properly cautious, I would simply let it go at that.

Actually I do not have next steps, but rather items for an agenda, what works out to a 10-point agenda. Please think of these simply as matters which one person connected with the systems evaluation study has seen turn up in various forms, and which in my opinion merit early attention. Some of these comments will look back rather specifically to what was found in the recent study, while others will try to look ahead at least a bit.

ITEM 1 - REMAINING POCKETS OF DISTINCTLY SUBSTANDARD PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICE

We all know that the New York systems plan is permissive and voluntary in nature. This has been its strength. But this quality also permits the local library to be as poor as it wants to be. One negative finding in the evaluation study is that a certain percentage of libraries are stragglers under the systems program. I am not referring to the small number that have officially stayed outside the program, but rather to those who ostensibly are part of the plan but which make use of very few if any of the system services.

Another way of putting this is that New York, for all its extensive library development, does not have a floor below which local library service can go. This means that individual New Yorkers may have library facilities which do not come up even to very minimum standards, as a result of the accident of where they were born or live. You may not have as many weak spots in New York, but those you have are very weak indeed.

In making this comment, I have not lost sight of the nice balance of State, system, and local responsibility in the New York program, nor am I advocating a departure from the basic concepts of local autonomy and voluntary participation. But it does seem to me that a leading State, for libraries as for schools, must give thought to the minimum standards, the floor of library service, which it will provide its citizens.

ITEM 2 - THE CENTRAL LIBRARIES ARE BEING SHORTCHANGED FINANCIALLY

I have said more than once that the central libraries in the New York program were something of an afterthought. The systems headquarters and activities came first in many cases, and then after a time it was realized that a library system would not genuinely be complete unless it has some kind of central strongpoint,

so central libraries were designated. The evidence in the evaluation study indicates that they are still orphans in the program - if not quite penniless, at least dollarless. As the reports came in during the study, I wondered if there might shortly be an outright revolt on the part of central libraries and their officials, on the grounds that they were being expected to carry far more than they were compensated for. Perhaps the recent legislation providing 5¢ per capita additional to central libraries nipped the revolution in the bud, but I must say that this amount on the face of it is not in keeping with the realistic planning which marks the rest of the New York program.

There seems to be no choice except to think fresh about the central libraries, deciding exactly what they are expected to do, and then to cost this out as any practical administrator would. The evidence of the evaluation study indicates that the results will show figures far larger than the central libraries are receiving today.

ITEM 3 - SIZE OF LIBRARY SYSTEMS

The systems grew naturally in size and scope, rather than being fitted to a preconceived pattern. By and large they seem to be about the right size, or perhaps the better expression would be the right compromise in size, and no evidence in the evaluation study would support a concerted effort to make them smaller or larger.

At the same time, it could be that for some purposes they are too small, and for others actually too large. Looked at from the standpoint of the reader, the central unit of a system should be within his reach, assuming reasonable effort. Research on just how far people will travel to get materials even under a systems program shows that this is seldom greater than 45 minutes of traveling time. The New York pattern assumes up to two hours of travel, which means that there are geographic gaps between central libraries. Thus the recommendation in the evaluation report for subcenters.

On the other hand, for bibliographical planning and the building of resources, some of the systems may prove to be too small. As we learn to depend more on computer control of centralized information, the existing systems may be too small either to justify extensive installations or to get full return from those installed. Increasingly, attention must be given to intersystem projects.

ITEM 4 - STUDENT USE

The New York data confirms the heavy student use found elsewhere, and particularly in the central libraries. If one wanted to be somewhat cynical, he could say that we built systems not knowing exactly for whom, and now that we find it is students who respond, we are somewhat uneasy. I see no grounds for uneasiness, if we face up to the situation and seek enough money to do the job required. There is no clear evidence in the evaluation study that conscious planning is being done for this largest of the user groups - either at the point of requesting money, or building staff, or selecting books, right down to determining how many seats are needed. Either we have students, and get money and resources to serve them as well as other readers in the community, or we drift along making plans as though the student will shortly go away, or as though it costs little to serve him. For myself I want the student in the library, but I also want a dollar to buy books for him and a seat in which he can sit.

In planning for student service in public libraries, I caution against assuming that school libraries will necessarily remain substandard. Sometimes the public librarian seems to rest his case on the proposition that the school library is not doing its job, so the public library will pinch-hit. Helping one's neighbor is all to the good, but it is not a sound basis for permanent and long-range planning. The question really is what the public library can and should do, assuming school libraries of some capacity. There will still be a job to be done, but it needs to be worked out jointly with school authorities, and once decided upon it should be financed forthrightly, without in substance taking funds from other programs for the purpose.

ITEM 5 - PROVIDING ADEQUATE PERSONNEL

The systems evaluation study in New York shows the same situation so often encountered, that of lack of qualified personnel to carry out library programs. No plan, excellent as it may be, can really achieve its goals if the necessary staff is lacking. For a period you have been successful in New York in raiding other States and attracting fresh personnel, but now some of the others are catching up both in program and salaries, so that I doubt whether you can continue depending on this source in the future.

We have tossed this problem of library personnel back and forth for a generation, and I certainly don't have any ready-made solution at this time. I do feel that both the evaluation study and the situation in general call for a fresh, hard look and some willingness to break out of the established mold and try genuinely new approaches. New York might well start with a sharp look at its use of library manpower. I am struck by how we say, a thousand times, that many librarians engage in activities for which professional background and training are not necessary, but I do not observe much adjustment or new staffing arrangements in libraries. It could be that experimentation along this line, demonstrations in a few libraries that are willing to break new ground, using State funds for the purpose, would be one of the most fruitful lines of exploration for your future.

One specific possibility that should be tried out thoroughly is that of utilizing library aides or assistants. With the rapid growth of the two-year community college, these people would best come from this source. Recently I have been pushing this to the point of saying that every professional librarian should have attached to him at least one library aide, an individual with two years of college and some library technical training either in formal classes or on the job. The two would work jointly and as a team. I predict that the two together could do twice as much work as either alone, and that together they would produce twice as much professional and semiprofessional work as one person alone possibly can. This should not be looked on as a means for reducing staff costs, because the library aide will have to get close to the salary which we now pay beginning professionals, but a significant result would be that the genuine professionals would move up several thousand dollars in level, probably starting at $8,000 and going to $12,000 without large administrative responsibility. The key point is that each professional would, under this plan, produce substantially more units of professional service.

ITEM 6 - RELATIONS AMONG TYPES OF LIBRARIES

One of the most encouraging features in the New York program is at the 3R's level, where you cut across types of libraries, not thinking of this as a program for university or research libraries alone. But down at the systems level, and on

down into localities, the structure and the planning still retain the old arbitrary divisions between public, school, and college libraries.

At the local level there is no question but what both the school and the public library are needed, except possibly in the very small and remote locality. However, the two must work more closely together if we are going to justify expenditure of public funds. This is not a matter of more dollars or a new structure, but of honest-to-God coordination across lines which we ourselves have built.

At the systems level, it seems to me that the natural trend in time will be that these will become systems of libraries, not solely public-library systems. By this I mean that the systems headquarters and the systems resources may well be planned as much for school students and college students as for the general public. You might picture this first as local libraries of several types, either taking the form of community agencies, or of school agencies, or of college agencies, or even of small business and industrial libraries. All of these - not just the public libraries - could relate to, turn to, request material from, and send their readers to the resources of a regionwide facility.

Still another question of relationships. New York State in the immediate future should give attention to the interconnections between several library programs, for school libraries, for public library systems, and now for the 3R's. Where do they connect? How should they be coordinated? How should funds be shared among them? What larger unit or agency will form their joint governmental base? Unless these questions are answered you will be running several distinct library programs.

ITEM 7 - WIDENING THE SOCIAL BASE OF LIBRARY SERVICE

I keep asking myself whom our statewide program serves and whom it does not serve. Let me suggest a continuum in terms of reading needs and groups and then comment on where the New York program hits hardest and where it hits least. There are 1) specialized readers, 2) student readers, 3) the general adult reader who uses libraries, 4) a considerable additional group of present and potential readers who do not use libraries, and finally 5) the nonreaders. In the past you served primarily the students and general readers, my second and third groups. Now with the 3R's program you are giving added attention to specialized readers. I direct your attention to the fourth group, made up of individuals with practical interests, with educational ambitions, with growing cultural interests, with social and civic concerns, as represented by the 10 percent annual increase in purchase of books and by their heavy reading of current magazines. I am not speaking here of the undereducated and disadvantaged, important as this group is, but rather of a very considerable part of our adult population which does seek communication through print, but which finds our libraries not suited to them.

We keep hearing of a communication revolution and an information explosion. In the face of this I am repeatedly struck by how little the library has changed. We know that ours is becoming a more educated population. In the face of this I note a decline in use of libraries outside the formal student group.

ITEM 8 - ELECTRONIC DATA PROCESSING

This intriguing topic is definitely receiving attention in the New York program, and undoubtedly it will have wide significance in the not-distant future.

Let me suggest a sequence of types of applications which may well apply to the use of computers and other similar devices in libraries:

1. Recordkeeping operations -- payroll, acquisition, circulation
2. Utilizing bibliographic information from central sources
3. New bibliographic tools as offshoots of the central sources
4. Storage and dissemination of information
5. Storage and communication of reading material
6. On-line interconnection between individuals at a distance and the automated library

But the computer is empty until something is put into it. As the programmers are fond of saying, "put garbage in and you get garbage out." These progressive steps will occur only when the librarian sits down with the machineman.

ITEM 9 - LACK OF BUILT-IN EVALUATION

One of the healthiest signs in the whole New York picture is the systems evaluation study itself. You elected to stop and look at what had been achieved and what had been missed.

But New York libraries, like others, will now go back to administration by faith. We know surprisingly little of who uses us, much less of why, and least of all with what result. The evaluation study utilized a method for getting user information that should become built in. The study also developed techniques for testing of performance, actual handling of reference questions, for example, and quality of reading guidance for children, which could be applied at intervals in a continuous self-evaluation.

Every institution is being tested by a changing society, the library included, and librarians would do well to look at themselves before an historical judgment is rendered. Not change for the sake of change, but change for the sake of necessary adjustment and improvement.

ITEM 10 - THE MUNDANE QUESTION OF MONEY

You have human commitment and continuing momentum for the various aspects of the New York program. The profession, the trustees, the educational authorities are mobilized. Now it seems to me that you must more directly involve the people at large if you are going to get the large sums of money required for the very ambitious program projected. New York is on its way toward making real that educational contribution that has long been claimed for libraries. You have a story of accomplishment that should be brought more directly to the people, and if it is, the people will give you the support you need.

But this is enough in the way of gratuitous advice from an outsider. It seems to me that the New York library program exemplifies a sound and basic principle: Establish aims - evaluate performance. This is what has carried you these many steps, and will carry you many more.

EMERGING LIBRARY SYSTEMS: THE 1963-66 EVALUATION OF THE NEW YORK STATE PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEMS

REACTION

By Dr. Herbert Goldhor, Director
Graduate School of Library Science
University of Illinois

One reason why most of us in the country look to New York is for the lessons of experience that you are undergoing. New York State is way out ahead, in regard to public library development, I think, without exception. It was exciting, educational, and beneficial to me to be involved in the survey, and to be here these three days with you to learn your reactions to the report.

I think that we are at the end of an era and at the beginning of a new era. Every age is an age of transition, it is true, but this is qualitatively different from other transition periods. That accounts in part for some of the many problems that you have, which you know better than I do. So I would like to try something, from the vantage point of a thousand miles' distance from your problems. I would like to try to spotlight what I think are four major implications for the future, brought out in part by the evaluation report.

One thing seems to me clear, in what has happened and is happening. There is going to be an increased importance in the role of the State, specifically the Library Development Division, both in terms of money (now almost $14,000,000 a year in State aid), in terms of standards (for example, LSCA Title II - Construction funds most dramatically perhaps), but increasingly in other ways. Perhaps the one area I would like to suggest as needing attention most is that of leadership and planning. It seems to me that LDD, insofar as possible, ought to give up operational functions as it can find others to take them over and do the one job that no one else can do, that is, to think and to plan and to look ahead and to experiment and to be the motivating and guiding force. The program of statewide processing is moving in this direction.

The second major implication, partly a prediction, I suppose, and partly a recommendation, I hope, is the increased role of the regional systems. I think this accounts for the growing pains that you are experiencing. You have fashioned here a new device in American public library operation and structure, the regional system, and it is a tribute to the success you are having, as well as the problems that you are having. If it had failed, you would not have any problems to speak of. It is a little unclear just what the future holds, but I would predict that the regional systems are going to be growing in strength, in authority, in financial resources, and in scope of operations. For example, I think they are going to be taking over more and more of the general consultant work which is the sort of operational responsibility that the State ought to give over to the systems. Intersystem cooperation is now developing, and in addition there is the whole movement that has been referred to several times here this morning, dealing not only with public libraries but with other types of libraries and on usually a regional basis. Someone has called this "the seamless web of library service." And I for one, not having John Humphry's responsibility in the matter, would recommend that the systems be viewed increasingly and more consciously as arms of the State. I think that the ambiguous position of the system, vis-à-vis the local library on the one hand and the State on the other, ought to be resolved in that direction.

Part of what I meant when I said that this is the end of an era is that for a hundred years we librarians have been looking forward to covering the country with public library service, giving the basic services of providing books and local facilities. And here in New York you are about to achieve it. In many large parts of the State you have achieved it. At least, we know basically how to do it and one can see the goal of 100 percent coverage within sight.

I would like to look beyond that. What are we going to do then? What are public libraries going to do then? I would suggest that what they are going to do is what has happened in every other field; when an outside frontier is conquered, one turns to internal frontiers - the development of improved and new and better services within the existing framework. And there are many such weak places in public library service, e.g. service to the disadvantaged. Consider the question of the limits of library service. Meredith Bloss, while at Milwaukee, performed a little study in which he had at the main circulation desk duplicate copies of about a hundred titles in modern American literature. The girls at the desk had instructions that, any time any one of the books was picked up by a patron, another copy of that book would be put out on the counter. The idea was to see how many copies you have to have of the books so that every patron that came along could always have his choice of the hundred titles. He found it was about ten. How many of the central libraries of New York State would be able to provide 10 copies on the average of the 100 modern leading American titles? Fader's report, "Hooked on Books," is a very stimulating and challenging exposition of what schools might be able to do in providing library service to people whom we have not generally reached. But it runs counter to everything we librarians have been taught. He gives the books away, in fact. Maybe we ought to think of things like that. There are many other possibilities of internal development that I am sure you will think of yourselves.

And finally the obvious trend, one that was reported on here today (in terms of hardware, the FACTS system and Electronic Data Processing), one which I would recommend and expect and hope will be applied here in New York, being the pioneers that you are in public library service particularly, that is the application of experimental techniques to service operations not just to hardware. We need to challenge the assumptions of practice on which we have rested for a hundred years or more and to try out ideas that run counter to them. Maybe they will be proved unworthy and the assumptions previously made will be found justified, but I suspect that in some case we will get new insights that we had not thought of before. We need to try out new ideas, ideas that come from any source. You out in the field perhaps, away from theoreticians in the library schools, should put into practice a pilot model with controls and a record of observations before and after the introduction of an experimental variable, and then publish the results for all to see. I am probably the smallest stockholder in one of our leading pharmaceutical companies, but at least I get their annual report; recently in reading it, I was struck by the statement that 75 percent of their sales last year were of products which did not exist 10 years ago. Librarians too need to put money into R and D just as they do in industry and increasingly in other fields.

You have had 10 years of experience with regional systems and despite the problems that you had and in some cases still have, I would suggest that your experience constitutes an arch through which you are now able to see, better than those of us in the rest of the country, new horizons yet ahead for the improvement of library service.

Reports of groups discussing eight questions raised by:

EMERGING LIBRARY SYSTEMS: THE 1963-66 EVALUATION
OF THE NEW YORK STATE PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEMS

Group I In view of the very considerable cost and the serious timelags which result from them, is there any way that some of the current practices in respect to book selection can be modified without jeopardizing the basic rights and responsibilities of the localities in this critical function?

Our moderator rephrased our question: "What if a minimum acquisition cost was required by the State?" However, for some time our group refused to think in terms of costs, but addressed itself to desirable elements in book selection and in training librarians and nonprofessionals for good book selection, in securing good book reviewing, etc. We asked ourselves who made book acquisition lists - were books examined? etc. We thought the problem of replacement lists could be solved more easily than the problem of lists of new titles. New adult books require the greatest speed in acquisition - timing is vital. We also realized that system consultant staff often had to choose between staying at headquarters and preparing buying lists for member libraries or getting out in the field and training staff and advising libraries on the elements of good book selection.

We have solved no problems but have two recommendations we hope you will approve and may wish to act upon:

1) We urge this conference request the Division of Library Development and a special committee of adult services consultants from systems to study the use of checklists of currently published books and nonbook materials to determine whether a single statewide service would be of benefit to library systems, and also to examine the implications of similar work in children's and young adult services. You note we were not talking about book selection time but rather about preparation for the selection process, calling books to the attention of member libraries. Our group envisioned the use of subject specialists, sharing their knowledge and experience - a collective approach - with an emphasis on prepublication listing whenever possible, and sources of reviews given.

We did not accept an earlier proposal to request a study of the feasibility of a new book review medium on a prepublication basis, a tool for New York systems to use as they wished with member libraries. We all recognized values in such a tool but could not consider it practical.

We realize, of course, the relationship of all our discussions and future actions to Mr. Stein's system design now under investigation in Nassau-Suffolk.

2) Our second recommendation concerns replacements:

We request DLD to coordinate the planning of extensive replacement lists of books and nonbook materials, to notify all systems of plans for major uses through *The Bookmark* or other means, and we request that lists when completed be distributed to systems; also we request that system consultants notify DLD of the need for lists in special fields.

Group II a How can we achieve greater coordination and better integration of the central library and the system program?
b How should and how can the base of support for central libraries be widened to include all of the area served?

As a beginning point for the discussion, the group talked about a variety of problems that enter into system-central library relationships. These included the need for more staff and space at the central libraries to help them fill their new role as an areawide resource, the problem of different pay scales for personnel, the many inherent problems in having two boards of trustees and two directors involved in what essentially must be a jointly operated program, etc.

In order to provide the whole group, which included trustees, system directors, central library directors, and State representatives, with some background on the variety of problems to be reconciled, we had members of the group describe some of their own situations and indicate the problems that arise in their relationships. This included a federated and cooperative system in which there was one director for the combined operation, cooperative systems with separate central library and system directors, and within this group those that have multiple central libraries, and finally, a contractual arrangement between a county and cooperative library system. We also discussed the different problems related to a one-county and multicounty operation and the difficulties in achieving a cohesive, unified approach in the latter group.

In the weaving of our statewide story, it became apparent that there were several dangling threads. As we progressed, it became apparent that neither systems nor central libraries have clearly defined their individual roles nor the programs that will be required to develop truly effective cooperative programs of library service. However, it was pointed out that both groups are being forced to think through their problems in preparing their 10-year plans for central library support under the new State aid program.

One would think that after all of this discussion of the problems, and the need for cooperation and coordination, that we would have had some plans for this approach to solving the problem. However, the group, rather than suggesting plans for a cooperative solution, voted for total integration and presents the following recommendations:

1. The group recommends that in any library system there should be one board of trustees and one director to administer both the central library and the library system. We further recommend that there should be only one strong central library in the system area. It was also suggested that this should be done whether or not it is based on building on an existing collection - in other words, if necessary, the system should consider the possibility of starting an entirely new collection.

   As might be expected, these recommendations did not meet with universal approval, but they did indeed reflect the majority opinion of the group.

2. The group also suggested that there should be increased support for central libraries established under the foregoing recommendations, and that this support should be based on the entire area being served. It was recommended that this should hold true whether the funds are provided by the State, Federal government, or the system area.

3. We also believe that substantial State and Federal funds should be provided, on a priority basis, to encourage the construction of such proposed joint system-central library facilities in one building in order to implement the foregoing recommendations. It was also recommended that the State plan for the utilization of LSCA funds be modified to provide adequate support to carry out the foregoing programs.

The group continued through the programmed break period in order to make two additional recommendations which they felt were important for implementation of the overall survey.

1. The group would like to support the recommendation made by Andrew Geddes yesterday morning, to have plans developed for integrated regional library service.

2. Finally, but by no means least, we would strongly support the first recommendation of the statewide survey, which stressed the need for coordinating all types and all levels of library service in the State, and further recommend that the State Library and the Division of Library Development be designated as the coordinating agencies to achieve this goal.

Group III a What specific bibliographic and locator tools which do not now exist would be most useful in improving interlibrary loan service?
b What should the priorities be in improving reference service in system libraries? Collections? Staff? Multiple copies? Interlibrary loans? Etc. (In quite specific terms.)

Union lists of serials are needed for holdings in regions. These lists are needed because these holdings are not now reported adequately anywhere. They need not necessarily include those few large libraries in the State which are already adequately represented in the 3rd edition of *Union List of Serials* and in *New Serial Titles*. Regional lists are expected to take some of the burden of interlibrary loan off these large libraries. Regional lists are also needed to show gaps in present regional holdings to be used as a basis for cooperative purchasing. State plans for coordinating union lists (rules of entry, etc.) should continue.

The question was raised as to whether multiple TWXing is not more economical than the cost of compiling a union list of serials.

For the location of books other than serials, hope is seen in the products of statewide processing (e.g. book catalogs at various levels) but this contains no

provision for retrospective reporting. The present searching devices built into the new interlibrary loan referral network contain no "reserve" feature, i.e. a book may be located but not obtained.

Future devices may include closed-circuit TV for identifying nonspecific references.

The question was raised about future plans for completion of checklists of the holdings of the State Library.

Priorities for improving reference services:

1. Better training of staff in interrogation of patrons. Perhaps the State could produce a training outline for giving on-the-job training in reference procedures.

2. There should be a broadening of reference material available through central book aid. Abstract services are needed. (Possibly the system may be used as the contractor rather than State.)

3. Subject specialists (e.g. science) are needed in central libraries.

4. In some areas system collections rival central library collections. More funds and staff are needed for central libraries. Written policies for central and system collections are needed. (If under one roof, the problem is much less.)

What should be the next steps to follow the evaluation report? What legislative proposals should there be?

An attempt should be made to establish, by legislation or regulation, remedies for the problems caused by inequality of support for local libraries within a system. The problem is that areas unwilling or unable to adequately support their own libraries dilute the resources of stronger libraries in neighboring areas. This problem of inequity should be given a high priority on the agenda of the Commissioner's Committee on Library Development. We realize that this problem is an old one and is not likely to be solved quickly. All means should be used to improve local support.

Aid to central libraries needs to be given a more rational base. The present 5¢ per capita is inadequate and needs to be increased. While we are thinking about ways to put it on a more systematic basis, an immediate increase, e.g. to 10¢ per capita, is required as a stopgap measure. To reap the benefits of central library aid, standards are needed by which central library performance may be judged. It is essential that local support be stimulated and maintained at a high level. Perhaps there can be devised optimum ratios of support for central libraries by the locality, the system, from its State aid receipts, and from the State under central library aid (as distinct from central book aid or "4 to 1"). System standards should also be developed in more measurable terms.

Group IV a What could and what should be done to get the poor libraries which are not taking advantage of system services to use them? Nothing further? Persuasion? Incentives? Coercion?

b Should the State "get tough" with communities which are too small to maintain an effective library? If small local libraries were discontinued how should service be given to these communities?

c Should local communities be required or simply encouraged to support library service at a minimum level? Should there be supplemental State support based to some extent on local ability to pay for library service? Should supplemental State support be in the form of services only? Cash? What is a reasonable ratio of State to local support?

While our group did not separate its discussion on the report as a whole from discussion on questions assigned to us, we did consider:

(1) Intermediate levels of libraries;

(2) Future amendments to the State aid formula - and the possibility of program tags for specific types of services;

(3) Question of access;

(4) Coordination with other types of libraries;

(5) Need for a new approach to financial support for libraries and library systems with a broadening of the tax base;

(6) Need for combination standards for an area which would tie public, school, and college libraries together.

Most of our discussion centered on library service at the local community level, particularly with small community libraries. Questions were raised concerning how far local autonomy should be respected if the local community does not meet minimum standards and how long library service should be tied to the lowest common denominator. It was pointed out that a "poor" library needed definition: it might be poor because of its quality of service as well as its support basis. The system has a responsibility for letting people know what a good level of library service is. Another point considered was whether the State should develop standards for minimum levels of service.

It was felt there might be different standards for different types of outlets, such as standards for central libraries, for intermediate or regional libraries, and for local community libraries. Within each set of these standards there might be progressive levels of registration: (1) the rockbottom level for initial registration which would need to be maintained just to keep alive, (2) a middle level which was above the minimum but not up to the maximum and, (3) the top level where the library meets the national standards for its class and size. A combination of incentives and gentle coercion would be required to meet the standards just mentioned.

The minimum level of service must be defined and when a community makes a conscientious effort to meet this minimum but can not support it there should be some equalization factor. The group agreed that standards should be enforced and that this should be a job shared by the State and systems.

In considering alternatives to small ineffectual libraries, mention was made of reading centers, bookmobile outlets, and the possibility of combining several small libraries into one strong library and bringing people by bus to the larger library unit. This is now being done in the Long Island area and the question was raised whether this technique might be demonstrated in a rural area by a special State grant.

The group talked about mandatory school district support and mandatory county support but arrived at no conclusion. However, it was agreed that universal access to libraries for all citizens in a system area requires a broader tax base of library support for libraries of all levels.

Group V What possible organizational or other steps can and should be taken towards further coordination of the public library systems and the emerging 3R's program?

The report was found to be generally excellent. There was a need for indication of some measure of improvement in quality other than quantitative, or in terms of accessibility. The report shows remarkable understanding of what system directors are trying to do. This is lost sight of in suggesting system chartering of units, though the paperwork could be handled.

What next in library development in New York State?

1) There are suggestions to head more into city-county relationships, e.g. Buffalo-Erie.

2) Counties are getting use of city libraries supported by cities with insufficient recompense. There is need for more county support.

3) It is recommended that the county be the tax support unit for library systems.

Possible organizational steps which can and should be taken towards further coordination of public library systems and the emerging 3R's program:

Can or should schools be made a part of this? High schools increasingly are doing college-level work. The big load of public libraries is at the high school level, not research: METRO is undertaking a study of this for New York City. This may indicate a need for statewide study.

Even with the present system, there is the problem of distance to central libraries, which might be solved by some type of closer intermediate library.

Perhaps the answer is specialization within and among the systems, with a communications network to make information available. Libraries using it should be required to meet minimum standards.

Use should be made of special library resources and personnel abilities - perhaps the Technical Assistance Act will be the bridge to 3R's.

What kind of tie-in and funding should there be between 3R's and the system board? Various ways were discussed. Should one direct the activity and accept funds for the other? Is it reasonable to expect to fund two agencies from the same sources without eliminating contradictions in function? The group opted for independent units in their own right in order to assure inclusion of special and private libraries through the 3R's.

Group VI a Should school libraries tie in to the public library systems interlibrary loan chain of resources directly? Should provision be made for school libraries to be eligible for membership in library systems?

b Assuming that the role of the public library places a unique leadership responsibility on the public library system, what steps, and at what levels, can be taken to try to accomplish a maximum coordination and improvement of all library services for students, in the local communities and the region as a whole?

The recommendations to which Group VI addressed itself were those that dealt with cooperation between school and public libraries.

We plunged right into some critical remarks. First, was not the report perhaps too late? School libraries have changed. No longer are they largely curriculum-oriented: they select materials for the "whole child;" their funding pattern has changed: they now have access to Federal funds. Will not coordination be fairly difficult now?

Second, the recommendations in the report represent only the public library point of view. The school library group participants concurred, indicating that the public library function was primarily to serve the preschool and postschool patron and that the school has the responsibility of serving the student public. Here, others pointed out that the secondary schools were enlarging their programs to include the adult in continuing education programs, and that the patron did not care where he got his materials as long as he got them. Neat, tidy packaging of responsibilities was no longer practicable. Third, criticism was voiced that the report did not take into consideration the regional centers which are now in the process of becoming under ESEA. These centers could be potent factors in the creation of new library systems for schools.

We then went on to discuss Section V, page 25, point 11: that special consideration be given to the smaller communities who cannot adequately support both a school and a public library. Could a single library program be undertaken here? Viewpoints were decided and very strong indeed. A few objected to this being done or even contemplated. All communities, no matter how small, should have separate library facilities - they feared that it would result in lessened local tax support for library purposes and that it would inevitably shortchange the public library. They pointed out that wherever it had been tried, the results were deplorable. Most, however, felt that it merited experimentation. Where the design had failed perhaps it was because it had been superimposed without regard to the standards and needs of both types of libraries. The majority felt that this seeemed perfectly feasible and might be desirable in selected instances but that in every case it would need to be a locally custom-designed operation.

There was a concensus on these points: Cooperation has been too spotty and not satisfactory - the time has come to move on to coordination. To make coordination effective, new or amended legislation is needed at both State and Federal levels, to permit all types of libraries to become members of some kind of library system, existing or new. With this end in view, we must study and explore <u>needs</u>, <u>costs</u>, <u>funding</u>, and the <u>feasibility of coordination</u>. This is a must before specific legislation can be recommended.

In the meantime, contractual relationships are legal and should be extended and implemented whenever practicable and when they can result in better service. Not that contracts can overtake the place of membership in the system. Contracts can cover only specific service on a cost-plus basis and must usually be funded from local funds. Membership in a system provides a variety of services, services made possible through State and Federal aid.

Group VII Is it reasonable to expect that local support of library service can be based on larger units? What units, if any?

Group VII was asked to consider whether it is reasonable to expect that local support of library service can be based on larger units, and what these units should be, if any.

There was general consesus that it <u>is</u> reasonable to expect that local support of library service can be based on larger units. But the group did not provide answers to the question of how to achieve the support. Total State support for public libraries was rejected.

The county was suggested as a possible taxing agency with the library systems assuming responsibility for the patterns of service, levels of support, and for a developmental plan in line with regional needs.

There was emphasis on the importance of regional planning to fit regional needs, with no single pattern applicable to all 22 systems in the State.

The question of placing taxing powers in the hands of library boards was discussed and rejected. It was pointed out that too many taxing agencies (87,000 presently in the U.S.) are already muddying the financial waters and that there is a governmental trend toward reduction rather than proliferation of these agencies.

If the county is to be the taxing agent, and the system is to assume responsibility for the levels of support, it is essential that close communication be established and maintained between government bodies and system boards. This communication becomes more difficult as well as more important in systems which embrace more than one county.

It was pointed out that financial support is greatest where the voice and face of the taxpayer - and voter - is heard and seen by the county board. The appearance of the library public at budget hearings can do much to insure more adequate support for the library. Education of the municipal authorities (by library boards) to an awareness of the library's service program, objectives, etc., is necessary.

DISCUSSION WITHIN GROUP VII

Group VII was unanimous in feeling that the report should be made available to trustees of systems and local libraries in the State to be used as a "training tool" for trustees through workshops and study groups. It was suggested that a summary of the report, such as Mr. Prentiss gave, would be useful for those who would not read the complete report.

It was also felt that there was a need for interpretation of the report to local groups. One suggestion would require someone thoroughly familiar with all aspects of the report and expert enough in library and State government structures to present the material to local groups.

Such an "administrative communicator," equipped with necessary visual aids, charts, etc., would make one-day presentations for trustee workshops throughout the State.

There was also a recommendation that the Division of Library Development assume responsibility for providing a code for library trustees.

The group was also concerned with the question of consolidation of service points versus the retention of small units or community libraries. There was a difference of opinion on this, with rural area representatives expressing strong feeling that service through community libraries was essential to their regions.

Again, the need for planning on a regional basis was emphasized, with the suggestion that a thorough and expert study was needed of how funds for library support could be raised on such a basis. It was generally agreed that no single plan was applicable to all regions of the State.

Group VIII a What services or functions which the State library agency is now performing do you feel it should continue to perform? Should not perform? Do you feel it would be useful and feasible to make the systems "arms of the State" to a greater extent than they now are? Specifically, what functions which the State agency now performs, or ought to perform, should be made the responsibility of the systems?

b What kind of data and "feedback" information not presently available would be most helpful in improving library service within a system and among systems?

Looking at the report as a whole, the group first asked how many of the recommendations require a change in legislation. Certainly the basic one, of opening system membership to nonpublic libraries, would. The present public library system legislation may be too exclusive; it has given the impression that other types of libraries would have to organize separate systems in order to strengthen themselves and their services.

The group felt that coordination of all types of libraries, which is desirable, must be carried out at all levels, perhaps beginning at the top, in Albany. Some doubts were expressed about whether unity in purpose and program is possible without structural reorganization.

It would be desirable to have new concepts or definitions of "we" and "they." Instead of "we," the public libraries, and "they," the other libraries, such as school libraries, it should be "we," all libraries and "they," all the people who need our services.

Leadership for coordination of library services might vary in different regions. Emphasis should be on the users of our libraries and our common objective of giving the best library service to everyone.

Concern was expressed by some about preventing one type of library from being dominant.

Turning to our particular questions, considerable discussion was devoted to the function of chartering and registration of public libraries. With most of our public library systems of the cooperative type, there is a delicate relationship between the systems and their member libraries which might be jeopardized if the systems had the major responsibility in this area. It should be a joint responsibility, both State and system visiting and advising, the system giving assistance in meeting requirements, the State making the final recommendation to the Regents. Every system should be given a list showing the charter status of each of its libraries, and the criteria to be met.

There are some obvious State responsibilities, so delegated because of their nature, such as certification of librarians and consultation on construction.

In the area of training, the State should not only train system personnel, but also guide and assist them in planning training programs within systems. The State should be responsible for statewide meetings for new system trustees, heads of central libraries, and possibly for directors of libraries of comparable size.

Consultation with local libraries, both member and nonmember, can very well be done by the system. With nonmembers it would be a matter of referral from the State of specific queries or calls for assistance.

Re the perennial question about whether the State should be a clearinghouse for informational materials, such as brochures, written policies and procedures, booklists, training outlines, etc., it may be that it is best to have regular direct mailings of samples of materials, newsletters, etc. among the systems themselves.

Looking at the questions assigned to other groups, we were most interested in No. VII concerning local support of library service. The idea of library districts or library authorities extending beyond local government boundaries is attractive.

It was felt that there might be an element of danger in mandated support based on a specified amount of money. Support might then tend to stay at a low level and so work against real growth.

EMERGING LIBRARY SYSTEMS...

SUMMARY

By Jean L. Connor, Director
Division of Library Development

A. INTRODUCTION

I have been asked to summarize briefly the findings of the 2-year evaluation study of the public library systems program in New York State. This task has been attempted before, but it does not grow any easier. Each time we have tried to do the job in less time and for a different audience. What is emerging is a sort of miniskirt, or, to use another simile, a Volkswagen version of the Lincoln Continental. As everyone who reads the ads knows, however, miniskirts are in vogue and VW's have their virtues. So, I shall do my best.

B. THE EVALUATION SEEN IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF PRIOR STUDIES

The public library program in New York State has been characterized over the past 20 years by a series of major studies. The current study, *Emerging Library Systems: The 1963-66 Evaluation of the New York State Public Library Systems*, should be seen in the perspective of the preceding studies and historical developments. The pattern of periodic review and evaluation has been highlighted by four major studies:

1. The first study to note is *A State Plan for Library Development*, which was done by the Division of Research of the State Education Department and published in 1947. As an outgrowth of this report, an experimental Regional Library Service Center was established in Watertown.

2. The second report was issued in 1950 by the Governor's Committee on Library Aid. The report, *Library Service for All*, departed from the concept of State-operated regional centers and stressed the county as the basic unit for the organization of a library system. In 1950, legislation was enacted which provided State aid to public library systems established by counties.

3. However, after about 5 years it became evident that the existing State-aid-to-systems law did not fit all areas of the State equally well. In order to review progress, Commissioner Allen in 1956 appointed the Commissioner's Committee on Public Library Service. Its report was published in 1957. One of the principal recommendations related to a provision whereby boards of trustees could vote to organize a library system without awaiting action by county boards of supervisors. In 1958 legislation was enacted which provided for cooperative library systems and for an increase in State aid.

4. In 1960, because we lacked a plan for the improvement of advanced library service, the Commissioner appointed a Committee on Reference and Research Library Resources. The committee recommended legislation which has never been enacted, but, as I will report later, the program got underway in 1966 with a legislative appropriation to the Education Department.

C. WHY AND HOW OF THE PRESENT STUDY

It might be well to point out that none of the prior major studies have been adopted in toto. The task of the research staff has been to present its findings - then the debates have ensued. The role of statewide committees should be noted. Almost all of

the recommendations have been modified after discussion, experimentation, and experience. Each report has served a useful purpose however, in forcing us to think. All reports have had an impact on the direction of library development in the State.

Now we come to the present study. Because New York State's library system program is a pioneering venture of national significance, it was felt to be desirable to assess progress, to evaluate results. In 1963, the Library Extension Division asked the Office for Research and Special Studies of the State Education Department to appraise the public library system program. The study, begun in 1964 and completed in 1966, was under the direction of Dr. Lorne H. Woollatt, associate commissioner for Research and Special Studies. Dr. Lowell Martin was a consultant to the Division of Evaluation throughout the study. Dr. Herbert Goldhor assisted on some portions of the study. S. Gilbert Prentiss, first as State Librarian and assistant commissioner for libraries, and later as a special consultant, assisted throughout. In addition, there were some separate contractual studies, the most important of which was the report of Nelson Associates, Inc., *Centralized Processing for the Public Libraries of New York State*.

Information for *Emerging Library Systems* was gathered from several sources, including "interviews conducted in each system headquarters, in each central library, and in a sample of the local libraries."[1] User surveys were administered in 39 public libraries. The user surveys were one of the major features of the survey.

> "The study considered:
> the goals stated in the 1957 *Report*...
> the manner and extent to which the State and localities are fulfilling their roles;
> the effect of systems upon the quantity and quality of materials and services accessible to users...
> the effect of the State agency and its relationship to systems..."[2]

The key questions were: How well and to what extent is the library system structure accomplishing what it is designed to do?, and the corollary, What improvements can be made?

D. NOTEWORTHY GAINS SINCE 1956

The study documented some "noteworthy gains in public library service as a whole in the State during the past ten years."[3]

First, the public library system structure is virtually complete: 22 library systems serve over 98 percent of the people of the State. Persons can tap, through their own local libraries, an entire chain of resources which are linked together by system organization.

Second, the finance picture has improved greatly. State aid to public library systems is now at the $14 million level, in contrast to $2,350,000 in 1956. At the same time, it should be noted, local tax support increased 109 percent from 1956 to 1965.

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1. *Emerging Library Systems*, p.I - 3.
2. Lorne H. Woollatt, "The Background, Scope, and Methodology of the Public Library Systems Report," p.5-6 of *Proceedings of the Meeting on New York State Library Development*, March 3, 1967.
3. *Emerging Library Systems*, p.II - 1.

Third, libraries have greatly improved resources. Between 1957 and 1964, local and system holdings increased from 1.66 per capita to 2.63 per capita, an increase of nearly one item per capita. In 1957, only 23 percent of the upstate libraries that are now system members exposed 1,000 new books annually, whereas in 1964, 60 percent of the same libraries did. State book aid is building stronger collections of non-fiction in the central libraries. "Access to films and records has improved greatly..."[4]

Fourth, accessibility to library service has increased. "The device for extending physical accessibility which seems...to have the greatest potential, is the interlibrary loan. The increase in use of interlibrary loans by libraries in the upstate systems amounted to 200 percent from 1957 to 1964."[5] Teletype links all library systems with the State Library. Bookmobile service, which in 1956 reached persons in six counties, now serves persons in 34 counties.

Fifth, there has been an improvement in the quality of service to the public. "There is now more time and ability for personal attention to individual users at the local level. Centralized processing...has proved a major timesaving factor, relieving local staff..."[6] It has helped produce tools to assist staff in locating materials outside the local collections. "In-service training has up-graded ability of local staff to serve the public more effectively."[7]

These then are the outstanding developments in public library service in New York State, under the system program:
1. improved structure
2. improved finance
3. improved resources
4. improved accessibility
5. improved quality

E. PROBLEM AREAS

The report, however, was not limited to a delineation of the strength of systems, but in fact much more attention was given to areas of weakness, "for the obvious reason that once the gains have been noted, the important job remaining is to find solutions to the problems."[8]

The report, as noted particularly in the summary, chapter XIII, points out a number of problem areas or needs.

There is a "need for coordinating library service of all types at all levels." It is suggested that "the present public library systems should be developed for coordination of all library service in their areas, including school and college libraries, with the possibility of these nonpublic libraries becoming system members."[9]

There is a "need to improve information service through public libraries...The current efforts in the State to develop a reference and research library resources program...should be accelerated..."[10]

There is a "need for modifying public library programs to meet student needs;" students "now comprise at least half of the public library users."[11]

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4. Ibid. p.II - 3, 4.
5. Ibid. p.VI - 38.
6. Ibid. p.II - 5.
7. Ibid. p.II - 5.
8. Ibid. p.II - 6.
9. Ibid. p.XIII - 2.
10. Ibid. p.XIII - 2, 3.
11. Ibid. p.XIII - 4.

There is a "need for a new approach to the support of public libraries and public library systems." In planning for any additional State aid the following principles should be observed:

> "Every community should be expected to have at least a minimum level of public library service...
>
> "The principle of equalization should be applied...
>
> "Local support of public library service should move as rapidly as possible toward larger units...
>
> "New State aid provisions...should...be designed to stimulate [higher] levels of local support..."[12]

There is a "need to strengthen central libraries...It is recommended that funds be made available to adequately compensate central libraries for the services which they perform on behalf of the system as a whole, and that central libraries be required to meet prescribed minimum levels of performance..."[13]

There is a need "to meet the backlog of building needs..."[14] State aid for public library construction should be considered.

There is a "need for periodic review of library use" and of "system programs." It is suggested that each library system "should conduct a user survey periodically;... each system should be intensively reviewed...every three years. Statewide progress should be reviewed every six years."[15]

There were some dozen other recommendations relating to such topics as intermediate-level service, interlibrary loan policies, intersystem coordination, the manpower problem, etc.

Of all the recommendations, however, the concluding one was probably the key one: "The...proposals should be discussed...and translated into legislative recommendations... Toward this purpose, an advisory council on libraries...should be appointed."[16]

F. USE OF THE REPORT

Because a report is only as good or as bad as later action proves it to be (on a shelf it is powerless and harmless), and because making recommendations on next steps is best done through the deliberations of a cross section of the profession, Commissioner Allen has again moved to seek the views of the field. He has, as you know, appointed a nine-member committee, chaired by Harold Hacker, "to make recommendations to the Department for next steps for the library program in New York State," giving particular attention to "the findings of *Emerging Library Systems: The 1963-66 Evaluation of the New York State Public Library Systems*" and "the status and needs of the emerging reference and research library program." No time limit has been set for the work of the committee, but if it is typical of other Commissioner's committees it will not complete its task in less than one year - it is more likely to be two years.

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12. Ibid. p.XIII - 4.
13. Ibid. p.XIII - 5.
14. Ibid. p.XIII - 7.
15. Ibid. p.XIII - 9.
16. Ibid. p.XIII - 9.